



American Planning Association
New Jersey Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

MEETING MINUTES

American Planning Association-New Jersey Chapter
Executive Committee Meeting
Friday, April 18, 2008
Room 556, Bloustein School
2:00 PM

In Attendance: Angela Clerico, Vito Gallo, Rebecca Hersch, Mike Levine, Courtenay Mercer, Jeff Perlman, Amy Sarrinikolaou, Katie White

Attending via speakerphone: Debbie Lawlor, Tara Paxton, Linda Wills

Absent: Robert Cotter, Louis Joyce, Chuck Latini, Carrie McCarthy, Maura McManimon Fennessy, Michael Powell, John Reiser, Carlos Rodrigues, Eric Snyder

Approval of April 18, 2008 agenda

Motion to approve the agenda; all in favor.

Approval of March 14, 2008 minutes

Mike Levine noted that the minutes should be revised on page 6 to reflect that the booth needed to be fixed for both the League at Atlantic City and the APANJ conference in New Brunswick. Vito Gallo made the motion to approve the agenda as corrected; all in favor.

Issue Reports:

- **Bylaws Revision**

Linda Wills reported the following: In working on the bylaws revisions. Linda had a question first as to what constitutes a quorum. The Bylaws require five however Linda asked if we should we change the standard. Vito Gallo noted that you should always have one more than the minimum majority. Courtenay Mercer indicated that a quorum would have to be a majority of positions that are filled at the time of the meeting, and in no event less than X amount. We have 18 voting members, so the quorum would be a majority plus 1. The members thought that this may require too many people. It was concluded that a quorum would be the "Majority of filled positions."

Currently we are limited in how many members may attend these meetings via speaker phone. The option of the free conference call service was recommended so that it may assist more committee members to attend the meetings. APA would set it up for the Chapter, and give access to APANJ. Mike Levine should reach out to APA regarding this free service. Then as Courtenay pointed out, we should do this for every meeting. The number and pass code would be indicated on the agenda.



The Attendance rules in the bylaws were also discussed. The Bylaws indicate that the Executive Committee may remove a member based on lack of attendance. The president usually makes the call. No change to this rule was recommended.

As for technical revisions to the bylaws, the position of the second PDO needs to be added. Chuck Latini who is the PDO would like to focus on maintenance of the CM Program, and the Second PDO would be responsible for the PP review sessions. Linda needed clarification whether the second PDO would be Co-chair or Vice Chair? It was in the opinion of Courtenay Mercer that the second PDO deserves a vote and should be a Co-Chair. Normally, each Chapter has a PDO who is the Chair of the PD Committee. APANJ is following the national model. It was agreed that the second PDO would be a Co-Chair.

Discussion was raised as to who the second PDO would be. Courtenay Mercer reached out to Brent Barnes as a potential candidate as he is teaching a PP review session for BOCEP. However Brent has a conflict and can not accept the position. Mercer suggested that APANJ relinquish the responsibility of APANJ to provide PP review sessions to BOCEP and Leo Vazquez. However the committee was hesitant in doing this. Amy Sarrinikolaou volunteered to take on the position which will begin in the Fall.

Another bylaw revision has to do with changing the name of the SDC to more appropriately reflect the committee's mission, and to clarify the responsibilities of the SDC. Angela Clerico volunteered to make recommendations regarding these changes.

The bylaws also have to be amended to make it clear that the bylaws amendment and the election may be done by "electronic ballot." Linda will prepare these final revisions to the bylaws.

- Appointment of Election Committee

As required by the election procedures Courtenay Mercer shall appoint with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee the Election Committee. Courtenay indicated the following members to the Election Committee: Brent Barnes, Alyce Brenner Nei, and Walter Lane. This committee would nominate the area representatives and the second vice president. Vito Gallo made the motion to approve these members; Debbie Lawlor seconded the motion; all in favor.

Mike Levine indicated the schedule for the Election Committee, and he will send this schedule to the Election Committee. The results will be announced at the APANJ Conference:

- June 2, send a call for nominations
- Sept 2 mail ballots to the members
- Oct 1 the ballot must be sent out

- Transportation Committee Proposal (Guest, Ray Thomzak)

Beginning with an introduction to the members of Ray Thomzak, Courtenay Mercer indicated the potential of establishing a transportation committee. These "sub committees" are usually set up on an ad hoc basis, a mission is established, and members join. If all goes well, the transportation committee would be established next year.

Ray Thomzak proposed the following: He has been a planner for 13-14 years. He wears different hats (environmental, traffic, circulation). His strongest areas of interest has always been transportation planning. He feels that there should be a focus of transportation of the APANJ. Transportation is vital to the economy, important to NJ and is linked to land use. He is willing to help



coordinate the start of a trial basis committee for transportation planning, not just in terms of cars, but bike and pedestrians, rail, bus, and freight. He hopes that members from NJ Transit, Port Authority, MPOs, and Septa, and other interest groups and agencies would have a member to join.

It was recommended that perhaps the APANJ could publish this idea in the next newsletter and see the reaction, and/or send an email blast "Call For Members." Vito Gallo indicated that if there is a significant interest, the first step would be to set up a Mission Statement (Vito) and then the Executive Committee would approve the committee, and then the real work begins, in terms of having meetings, workshops, etc. The invitation in the newsletter or as an e-blast would be a good start.

Ray Thomzak indicated that the awards given out at the NJAPA conference are not reflective of transportation planning topics, and he would like to see more attention given to transportation planning.

Vito did indicate that the more focused committees APANJ has, the more participation you will have and Debbie Lawlor agrees. The Executive Committee thanked Ray for his time, and will discuss this topic. Courtenay Mercer will get back to him.

- Film: The Unforeseen – Update

Mike Levine indicated that the cost to obtain the movie for filming would be \$500, starting May 1. For that price, the Chapter could show the film at as many venues as we like. The Chapter would just need to sign a contract indicating that we are not charging. The Chapter can only ask for donations.

Mike Levine and/or the area reps will arrange to move the film around the region, and maybe at the APANJ conference-possible at end of the day. Mike Levine needs exact dates for the contract. He will contact the area reps for their availability, and communicate further through email.

- Confirmation of 2008 Executive Committee Meeting Dates

Linda Wills confirmed that the next Executive Committee will be held May 16 in Harrison. Location TBD. The meeting will be held from 11AM to 12:30PM. The Harrison mobile workshop will start at 1 PM and end at 2 PM. The panel discussion will go until 4 PM. Hopefully this workshop will count for 3 CM credits.

- Bulletin Editor and computer needs.

Rebecca Hersch indicated that her computer died, and the situation is urgent as she needs a computer and the associated software to complete the APANJ newsletter. She asked if APANJ can chip in for the costs for the computer and/or software. She did not request a specific dollar amount. Courtenay Mercer indicated that there is nothing in the budget right now, but we could amend the budget to pay for the software including possibly Microsoft Publisher and Adobe Acrobat and Photo software. Rebecca indicated that she would price it out, and expects everything to be under \$1,000.

Vito Gallo made the motion to approve to amend the budget for those three programs/software not to exceed \$1,000; Jeff Perlman seconded; all in favor.



Committee/Office Reports:

President's Report Courtenay Mercer

Currently, the APANJ is looking for volunteers for the planning assistance program. Mike Levine indicated that he will put the announcement out on the website. The RFP is due May 31. The League of Municipalities already posted the RFP on their website. Courtenay Mercer plans to send out the same RFP announcement on the listserv as well. Courtenay Mercer asked the student reps if we could we use a student intern from the potential summer intern program that they proposed to establish to help with Planning Assistance Program. Katie White will ask Carrie McCarthy.

Mercer continued and said that she will be in Las Vegas for leadership tasks. Mercer asked if the Executive Committee had any comments on the APA Policy Paper Climate Change. She also organized an impromptu happy hour in Las Vegas – for NY, NJ and PA chapters. Over 70 are attending the National Conference. (76). Costly to attend the Vegas conference.

She mentioned that Woolwich Twp. was endorsed.

The SPC did not pass the Resolution to support the Dept of Agriculture and Courtenay Mercer will be writing an article in her President's Corner about this topic.

As a reminder Chuck Latini and Courtenay Mercer will attend the Board PP next week as a follow up to the APANJ letter to the Attorney General.

First Vice President Deborah Lawlor

Nothing to report.

Second Vice President Jeff Perlman

Jeff has been taking a look at other Chapter's year end reports. Jeff reminded the Executive Committee that the area reps and Committee Chairs must include a year end summary in the report as well.

Secretary's Report Amy Sarrinikolaou

Nothing to report.

Sustainable Design Committee Angela Clerico

Angela met with Athena Sarafiedes to discuss the NJDEP Office of Planning and Sustainable Communities. Athena wants to work with Angela and the SDC to make the new DEP office more visual to planners. At the next SDC meeting, Angela will speak about the new office.

Angela put together a list of topics that she wants the SDC to research including:

- Capacity Based Planning –
- Session ideas for the APANJ conference.
- Design issues
- Compilation of a list of sustainability consultants

She also wants to organize a "Meet and Greet" with the NJAPA and the USGBC. Currently, there are not a lot of planners on the USGBC.



Housing Committee Report Vito Gallo

The Housing Committee conducted a telephone conference on Mar 20, and as a result, determined to establish 4 subcommittees as follows:

1. Roberts Bill (A500) Study Committee
2. The New Jersey Homeownership Preservation Bill Study Committee (foreclosure prevention bill)
3. DCA Housing Policy Task Force Review Committee
4. COAH's Third Round Rules Review Committee:

While no one volunteered to serve on the fifth subcommittee "Congressional Housing Initiatives" to monitor the various Congressional initiatives, it is a particular interest of Vito's and therefore he volunteered to keep the Committee informed on these initiatives.

Vito expects that each sub committee will report back to the Housing Committee and compile brief write-ups that could be published in the newsletter.

Vito also discussed the H.R. 5830, the proposed \$300 Million FHA Housing Stabilization and Homeownership Retention Act. The following is from an April 17, 2008 press release from the House Committee on Financial Services:

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In response to the nationwide economic downturn caused by the housing and credit crisis, members of the House Financial Services Committee today introduced legislation to combat the unprecedented rise in foreclosures, and the associated impact on cities and states. The legislation first announced by Chairman Barney Frank in March, will be divided into two measures: H.R. 5830, the FHA Housing and Homeowner Retention Act, to expand the FHA program to help refinance at-risk borrowers into viable mortgages and also requires the Federal Reserve Board to conduct a study on the need for an auction or bulk refinancing mechanism. The second measure, H.R. 5818, the Neighborhood Stabilization Act of 2008, introduced by Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity Chairwoman Maxine Waters, will provide loans and grants to states and cities to deal with problems associated with large numbers of foreclosures in neighborhoods across the country.

A committee mark up session and vote on the two measures are scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 23rd and Thursday, April 24th.

A summary of the H.R. 5830, the FHA Housing and Homeowner Retention Act as follows:

This voluntary program would permit FHA to provide up to \$300 billion in new guarantees to help refinance at-risk borrowers into viable mortgages. This \$300 billion is the total amount of outstanding loans that may be insured under the program. The government would only have liability if a borrower defaults and the amount recovered in foreclosure is below the outstanding principal. CBO is currently reviewing the proposal and their preliminary estimates are government losses between 1 and 2 percent of this \$300 billion authorization.

In exchange for the acceptance of a substantial write-down of principal, the existing lender or mortgage holder who chooses to participate would receive a "short payment" (i.e. a payment for less than the outstanding balance as payment in full) from the proceeds of a new FHA-guaranteed loan if the new loan would have terms that the borrower can reasonably be expected to pay and the



borrower agrees to share future home appreciation with the government. In short, the program would provide refinancing assistance to allow families to stay in their homes, protect neighborhoods and help stabilize the housing market.

Under the program, a borrower or existing loan servicer of an eligible loan would contact an FHA-approved lender, who would determine the size of a loan that would be consistent with the requirements of the program and that the borrower could reasonably repay. If the current lender or mortgage holder agrees to a write-down that is sufficient to meet the requirements of the program and make the new loan affordable, the FHA-lender will pay off the discounted existing mortgage.

In addition to a first lien, the government will retain a share of future home-price appreciation to help defray the government's costs and prevent unjust enrichment (e.g., borrower flipping). When the borrower sells the home or refinances the loan, the borrower will pay from any profits the higher of (1) an ongoing exit fee equal to 3 percent of the original FHA loan balance; or (2) a declining percentage of any profits (e.g., from 100 percent in year one to 20 percent in year five and 0 thereafter). After year five only the 3 percent exit fee will apply from borrower profits.

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Vito concluded his report and addressed the housing task force set up by Commissioner Doria. There was a NYT editorial comment that criticized the task force membership as being biased to homebuilders. The report for the task force has not been released yet, and there has been an attempt to "kill" this bill. Vito doesn't see this bias on his committee. Vito talked with Commissioner Doria, and he said that he made an effort to not stack the task force. Through correspondence of the Executive Committee, Carlos Rodrigues offered to make a comment on the NYT article in the newsletter, but Vito thinks that it may not be appropriate to do so at this time.

Chapter Administrator Report Michael Levine

Mike received an email from one APANJ member, and gave a good review of the newly designed email blasts. He received another request from an APANJ member for APANJ notepads and pens. A discussion began about the potential to design APANJ t shirts, mugs, etc. There may be a potential to do this through Lands End. These products could be sold at the conference.

Mike reported that there are 1,092 members updated of which 300 are not a member of AICP. These numbers are similar to the NY numbers. The APANJ Classifieds have brought in \$700. There are currently 21 advertisers in the newsletter with a guarantee of 6 issues. These advertisers will be carried for 3 to 4 months, and then caught up with the 6 issues. At that time we will ask for renewal. Then the renewal time will be based this on the fiscal year rather than a calendar year. There is a surplus of redevelopment handbooks and the Guide to NJ Planning in the warehouse including 600 handbooks, and 1,000 of the Guide.

Mercer hasn't heard an update as to when the handbook will be updated. There is a call for volunteers to help update the Complete Guide to NJ Planning. Tom Delassio is willing to co-lead the effort and Brent Barnes maybe to help. Debbie will work on this initiative. Mercer will follow up with Tom Delassio regarding a gubernatorial debate at our conference.

No emails have been received to-date about Call for Sessions for the conference.



Bulletin Editor's Report Rebecca Hersh

The deadline to get articles in for the newsletter is Friday, April 25, and she is always looking for events for the newsletter calendar.

Student Representatives Katie White

Carrie McCarthy

The Bloustein School is hosting the Annual New York Metro Area Student Planning Studio Face Off on Thursday, May 8, 2008 from 6-9 pm to be held at the Bloustein School, Special Events Forum. There will be presentations of the best studios completed by graduate students at Columbia, Hunter, NYU, Pratt, and Rutgers this year. The EJ Bloustein school is donating food and drink for the event, and Katie is organizing the event.

Area Representatives Linda Wills

Nothing to report.

Tara Paxton

Regarding the APANJ training sessions available through the web conferencing, we need someone to take the initiative, and to create a schedule for area reps of the dates and times.

The PD Committee decided they wanted to do it. Debbie will start to organize the schedule. Tara is thinking that the Counties would be interested in facilitating the webinars.

We would like to get an Ocean County and northern area event scheduled. We would like to charge \$5 per person for the webinar.

As a final issue, Vito suggested that serious issues that come up between Executive Committee meetings should be deferred until the next meeting rather than discussed via email (i.e. the NYT editorial on the task force and/or the listserv issue). Vito would prefer a telephone conference call at the minimum as opposed to email. In dealing with the listserv issue it was a subject that needed immediate attention however it was not meant to set a precedent as to how the Executive Committee operates.

Adjourn; all in favor.

Respectfully submitted: Amy Sarrinikolaou